

DHH 3

Office of State Budget and Management
Establish New, Receipt-Supported Positions
 (G.S. 143-34.1)

Agency: Dept of Health and Human Services

Division: Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing

Budget Code: 67425

Center Title: Wireless

Center Number: 6726

*** Position Information ***

Proposed Classification: Community Services Consultant Proposed Salary Grade: 66

Salary Range: \$28,888 - \$43,460 Proposed Effective Date: 01 / 01 / 06

Number of Positions: 7

| | <u>Center Authorized Budget</u> | <u>Current Request</u> |
|---------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Total Budget | \$784,133 | \$316,841 |
| Receipts | <u>\$784,133</u> | <u>\$316,841</u> |
| Appropriation | \$0 | \$0 |

Funding Source(s): Wireless Connections Surcharge Receipts

Justification for Position (including description of duties and responsibilities): The Division's statutory mission includes the distribution of specially-designed telecommunications and emergency alerting equipment to eligible Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind North Carolinians and outreach to promote awareness of resources for achieving equal access to the telecommunications system and other community resources, such as emergency alert and response services.

As a result of the Division's recent and ongoing extensive outreach endeavors, there has been an overwhelming increase in the demand for services, far outstripping staff capacity to meet the demand. The level of demand for services is anticipated to remain significantly high.

An indication of the need to enhance staff capacity is that despite the increased public awareness, only less than 5% of all eligible North Carolinians to date have received needed equipment. (North Carolina has over 1 million people with hearing loss.) Prior to the start of our media campaign, our Division received an average of 275 telephone inquiries about our equipment and services. In the first month of our campaign, we received 5,500 inquiries. We now receive an average of over 1500 inquiries monthly. The number of customers we served directly out of the seven Regional Resource Centers in SFY2004-2005 has increased 67%. A critical component of the equipment distribution program is the training of customers so that they may be able to use the equipment to access the telecommunications system. Many customers must wait up to several months before our staff could train them in the effective usage of many types of telecommunications equipment. At the same time, many of our staff members in other positions (and which are supported by state appropriations) are helping with the assessment, installation and training when they need to be focusing on their regular duties.

DHH 3

An analysis of our customer service database reports shows that other staff positions at all the Regional Resource Centers provide up to twice as many services outside of their normal duties, and those services (consultation, training and trouble-shooting relating to technology) are in response to the demand for TEDP equipment. To remedy this problem, the Community Services Consultant position assigned to each Regional Resource Center is to assume the responsibility for providing services in conjunction with TEDP and the Emergency Awareness Program.

In addition, North Carolina is a high-risk state with regard to natural disasters. Deaf and Hard of Hearing people invariably do not have access to emergency warnings and emergency response services. This position will provide the kind of services – primarily consultation and training – that would help Emergency Management agencies to ensure access as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Among the agencies to receive these services are 911 call centers.

Description of Duties and Responsibilities:

Technical Assistance and Training:

- Assist in the assessment of telecommunications and emergency equipment needs either at the customer's home/workplace or the agency that serves Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
- Assist in setting up equipment and provide training in the effective utilization of equipment.
- Provide troubleshooting for equipment problems.
- Provide training to law enforcement personnel in assuring effective communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in various situations.
- Ensure equal access by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people at community events by setting up specialized assistive technology at those events.

Emergency Awareness Program Support

- Provide consultation to 911 centers in the procurement and installation of specialized equipment for Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers.
- Provide 911 training in the effective use of tty calls, including test calls.
- Provide training to customers in safety awareness and disaster preparedness.
- Provide consultation to Emergency Management personnel in the development and implementation of emergency alert and response systems that assures equal access by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
- Provide consultation and assistance to Emergency Management personnel during disaster drills utilizing Deaf and Hard of Hearing "survivors."
- Provide consultation and assistance to county personnel in serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing people during actual disasters.

Statutory Reference for Request: G.S. 62-157, G.S. 143B-216.33

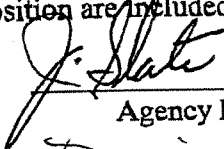
The requested amount will cover salary of \$253,218 (\$36,714/position) and fringes of \$63,623 (\$9,089/position). No estimates for equipment, supplies, etc. for each position are included.

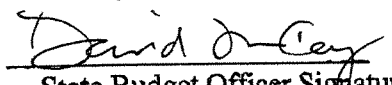
Jim Slate

Presentation to be made by

Interim Director, B & A

Title


Agency Head Signature


State Budget Officer Signature

OK